

Message Text

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INFO

AMEMBASSY BELGRADE 1852

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST

AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PRAGUE

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY SOFIA

AMEMBASSY WARSAW

AMEMBASSY PARIS

USMISSION BERLIN

USMISSION NATO

ZENAMCONSUL LENINGRAD BY POUCH

C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 7514

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, GW, UR

SUBJ: SOVIETS CONTINUE POSITIVE TREATMENT OF SCHMIDT,
BUT THEIR CONCERN SHOWS THROUGH

1. SUMMARY. IN THEIR PUBLIC POSITION OF FRG EVENTS, SOVIETS
CONTINUE TO KEEP TO THEMSELVES ANY DOUBTS ABOUT FUTURE COURSE
OF SCHMIDT GOVERNMENT'S EASTERN POLICY. THE NEW TEAM - AND
ESPECIALLY SCHMIDT - IS TREATED FAVORABLY, AND FRG PLEDGES OF
COMMITMENT TO DETENTE AND TO OSTPOLITIK GET PROMINENT TREAT-
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MENT. BEHIND THE WORDS, HOWEVER,

THERE ARE SIGNS OF SOVIET UNEASINESS ABOUT THE DEPTH OF THAT COMMITMENT; AND THE SOVIETS MUST BE CONCERNED AT THE POSSIBILITY THAT THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE FEDERAL ENVIRONMENT AGENCY IN WEST BERLIN MAY FORCE AN EARLY POLICY DECISION ON THEM BEFORE THEY HAVE HAD A GOOD LOOK AT SCHMIDT IN ACTION. WITH REGARD TO SOVIET-GDR RELATIONS, WE ARE NOT PERSUADED THAT THE GUILLAUME AFFAIR HAS BECOME A DIVISIVE FACTOR, ALTHOUGH THERE IS SOME ADVANTAGE FOR THE SOVIETS IN HINTING THAT IT HAS. END SUMMARY.

2. IN THEIR MESSAGE TO SCHMIDT (FRONT-PAGED IN PRAVDA MAY 17) BREZHNEV AND KOSYGIN IN EFFECT SAID THEY WILL DO WHAT THEY CAN FOR HIM. THE SOVIET LEADERS EXPRESSED THEIR CONVICTION THAT BILATERAL COOPERATION WILL DEVELOP AND DEEPEN AND ASSERTED THAT THEY WOULD DO EVERYTHING IN THEIR POWER TO HELP RAISE RELATIONS TO A STILL HIGHER LEVEL. PODGORNYY AND GROMYKO CONGRATULATIONS TO SCHEEL ON ELECTION TO PRESIDENCY WERE SIMILARLY WARM; MOREOVER, THERE IS NO HINT IN THESE TWO MESSAGES, OR ELSEWHERE IN THE PRESS SO FAR, THAT THE SOVIETS ARE GEARING UP FOR A PROTEST (A LA GDR) THAT THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION VIOLATES THE BERLIN AGREEMENT.

3. CONTINUITY IS STILL THE NAME OF THE GAME IN SOVIET PRESS TREATMENT OF THE SCHMIDT GOVERNMENT. SCHMIDT CONTINUES TO BE DEPICTED AS EXPERIENCED, ENERGETIC, AND CLOSE TO BRANDT--HIS "CROWN PRINCE" AS ONE ACCOUNT PUT IT. MEDIA HAVE BEEN MORE CIRCUMSPECT ABOUT GENSCHER, AND GROMYKO'S CONGRATULATORY TELEGRAM TO HIM (PRAVDA MAY 18) LACKED THE WARMTH OF THE MESSAGES TO THE OTHER FRG LEADERS. NEVERTHELESS, KOMSOMOLSKAYA PRAVDA MAY 12 CREDITED GENSCHER WITH A SHARE IN DEFINING AND CARRYING OUT BASIC ASPECTS OF FRG INTERNAL AND FOREIGN POLICY. FRG AMBASSADOR SAHM TELLS US THAT THE SOVIETS HAVE AGREED TO SAHM'S REQUEST TO SPEAK ON NATIONAL TELEVISION THIS WEEK TO MARK THE 25TH ANNIVERSARY MAY 24 OF THE FRG BASIC LAW. NO DOUBT THEY CALCULATED THAT HE WILL REASSURE SOVIET VIEWERS THAT FRG FOREIGN POLICY HAS NOT CHANGED.

4. LATEST SIGNIFICANT EXAMPLE OF THE SOVIET PRESS LINE IS LONG PRAVDA ARTICLE MAY 18 BY BONN CORRESPONDENT GRIGORYEV MARKING FIRST ANNIVERSARY OF BREZHNEV'S VISIT TO FRG. THE VERY THEME OF

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THE ARTICLE STRESSES BREZHNEV'S PERSONAL COMMITMENT TO THE FRG-USSR RELATIONSHIP, AND GRIGORYEV CITES INTERVIEWS WITH SCHMIDT, SCHEEL, AND FOREIGN MINISTRY STATE SECRETARY WISCHNEWSKI TO UNDERLINE IMPORTANCE OF VISIT. ACCORDING TO SCHMIDT, VISIT LAID BASIS FOR DEVELOPMENT OF MUTUAL CONTACTS "WHICH WE INTEND TO CONTINUE." SCHEEL INTERVIEW, CONDUCTED BEFORE HIS ELECTION TO PRESIDENCY, MAKES SAME POINT, AND WISCHNEWSKI EMPHASIZES VISIT'S CONTRIBUTION TO ECONOMIC COOPERATION.

5. SCHMIDT INTERVIEW HIGHLIGHTS FRIENDLY ATTITUDE OF NEW CHANCELLOR AND HIS GOVERNMENT TOWARD USSR. SCHMIDT EXPRESSES SATISFACTION THAT SOVIET PRESS HAS RIGHTLY CONCLUDED THAT NEW

GOVERNMENT WILL FOLLOW BRANDT'S POLICIES. THE COURSE OF DEEPENING CONTACTS WITH THE SOVIET UNION "WILL REMAIN IMMUTABLE" AND THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT AND PEOPLE "CAN BE CONFIDENT THAT WE WILL CONTINUE THE POLICY OF GOOD-NEIGHBORLINESS AND COOPERATION WITH THE USSR AS A WHOLE AS WELL AS IN ITS DETAILS." ON A PERSONAL NOTE SCHMIDT RECALLS THAT HE TRAVELLED TO MOSCOW FOR TALKS AT A TIME WHEN SUCH A THING WAS NOT IN FASHION, AS IT IS NOW.

6. BEHIND THE BRAVELY POSITIVE FACADE, SOVIET NERVOUSNESS ABOUT THE FRG'S COURSE SHOWS THROUGH IN PRESS ACCOUNTS. VIRTUALLY EVERY STORY REFLECTS A STRONG SOVIET NEED TO REASSURE. THE REPEATED REFERENCES TO CDU/CSU MACHINATIONS AGAINST BRANDT'S INTERNAL AND EASTERN POLICIES ARE MAINLY AN EFFORT TO EXPLAIN HIS FALL WITHOUT MENTIONING GUILLAUME; BUT THEY WILL ALSO GIVE THE SOVIET READER A HEALTHY RESPECT FOR THE STRENGTH OF "REACTION" IN THE FRG. THE LANGUAGE IN A NEW TIMES COMMENTARY MAY 17 READS LIKE A WARNING TO SCHMIDT: "NO CONCESSIONS TO THE OPPOSITION FORCES. ANY INCONSISTENCY, ANY CONCESSION, ONLY WHETS THE APPETITES OF REACTION." AND GRIGORYEV, IN HIS MAY 18 PIECE, MAY HAVE INTERNAL DOUBTERS IN MIND WHEN HE REMINDS HIS COMESTIC READERS THAT "THE EXPERIENCE OF THE LAST YEAR HAS SHOWN THE NECESSITY AND USEFULNESS OF GOOD RELATIONS BETWEEN THE FRG AND THE USSR."

7. RHETORIC ASIDE, THE SOVIETS UNDOUBTEDLY REALIZE THAT THE FEDERAL ENVIRONMENT AGENCY ISSUE MAY WELL PRESENT THEM WITH A DISAGREEABLE POLICY CHOICE LONG BEFORE THEY HAVE HAD A CAREFUL CONFIDENTIAL

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LOOK AT THE NEW GOVERNMENT IN ACTION. THEY WOULD LIKE AT LEAST TO SEE THE FEA ESTABLISHMENT POSTPONED, BUT THEY PROBABLY REALIZE THAT EVEN THIS WOULD BE DIFFICULT FOR SCHMIDT, AS INDEED IT WOULD HAVE BEEN FOR BRANDT. WE WOULD BE SURPRISED IF MOSCOW HAS YET COME TO GRIPS WITH THIS THORNY QUESTION.

8. EFFECT OF GUILLAUME AFFAIR ON SOVIET-GDR RELATIONS IS STILL UNCLEAR FROM WHERE WE SIT. THERE IS SOME PUBLIC EVIDENCE OF A SOVIET DESIRE TO PUT SOME DISTANCE BETWEEN THEMSELVES AND THE EAST GERMANS, BUT IT IS NOT VERY CONCLUSIVE. OBSERVERS HERE HAVE COMMENTED ON THE THREE-HOUR GAP BETWEEN THE FIRST TASS REPORT OF THE BREZHNEV-SINDERMANN MEETING MAY 13 (WHICH SIMPLY NOTED THAT THEY HAD MET, WITHOUT THE USUAL POSITIVE CHARACTERIZATION) AND THE SECOND REPORT, WHICH CONTAINED THE FULSOME COMMUNIQUE LANGUAGE DESCRIBING THE MEETING AS TAKING PLACE IN AN ATMOSPHER OF "FRIEND-

SHIP, SINCERITY, AND FULL UNITY OF VIEWS." WE ARE NOT INCLINED TO MAKE TOO MUCH OF THIS, NOR (NEW YORK TIMES NOTWITHSTANDING) OF THE MINOR DIFFERENCES IN WORDING BETWEEN THIS YEAR'S AND LAST YEAR'S SOVIET VE-DAY LEADERSHIP GREETING TO THE DGR LEADERS.

9. PERHAPS MORE SOLIDLY, THERE HAS BEEN AN INTERESTING SOVIET RELUCTANCE TO BECOME TOO CLOSELY ASSOCIATED IN PUBLIC WITH THE GDR PROTESTATIONS OF LOYALTY TO DETENTE. THE SOVIET PRESS HAS NOT PLAYED BACK HONECKER'S MAY 12 PAEAN TO BREZHNEV-STYLE DETENTE, NOR DID COMMUNIQUE'S OF SINDERMANN'S MOSCOW MEETINGS WITH BREZHNEV AND KOSYGIN CARRY ANY RINGING ENDORSEMENT OF DETENTE. IT SEEMS THAT THE SOVIETS ARE NOT ANXIOUS TO CREATE THE IMPRESSION THAT, IN THE WAKE OF THE GUILLAUME REVELATION, THEY ARE FULLY IN ACCORD WITH GDR PRACTICES IN PURSUING ITS RELATIONS WITH THE WEST. IT IS IN MOSCOW'S INTEREST TO LET THE WEST THINK IT IS MIFFED WITH THE GDR, SINCE THAT REDUCES SOVIET RESPONSIBILITY FOR GUILLAUME'S ACTIVITIES, BUT WE ARE NOT CONVINCED THAT GUILLAUME HAS REALLY STRAINED BILATERAL SOVIET-GDR RELATIONS. OUR GUESS IS THAT, IF STRAINS DEVELOP, THEY WILL BE THE RESULT OF THE CONSEQUENCES THE BRANDT RESIGNATION MAY HAVE FOR FRG-SOVIET RELATIONS, NOT OF THE ACTIVITIES OF THE SPY WHO WAS THE APPARENT CAUSE OF THAT RESIGNATION.
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